

Language of Advertising Research.

Due Friday 28th August

This activity asks you to report on an investigation that you will undertake into an aspect of advertising, drawing conclusions about its significance.

You will complete work in class and for homework. Your report must be presented in written form.

You will be assessed on how well you:

propose your research questions and select relevant information from a range of resources that are documented in a bibliography

present observations that are supported from your texts and draw conclusions

structure and organise your information and ideas in an effective written format.

This task is worth three level 2 NCEA English credits.

Introduction

Advertising is one of the most pervasive types of communication that we encounter. It is omnipresent, but rarely taken seriously, neither for its sophisticated communication techniques nor for the ideas and values that it conveys. This task asks you to take advertising seriously, and look closely not only at how it conveys its message, but what it is telling us. Advertisers use many of the most persuasive and subtle visual and verbal language techniques to promote their products and services. You will become familiar with many of these, and assess their effects. You will also look at the values and assumptions that advertising is based on and promotes, and assess the impact of these in the particular context of the advertisements that you choose to study.

You are going to focus on advertising in print media, as the advertisements you select need to be included in your final study.

Task 1: Selecting a Focus

- a. The first important decision to make is what you going to investigate. A starting point could be advertising for a product that you are already aware of and interested in.

Other ideas you could consider include product categories such as

Cars

Health products

Out-doors products

Cosmetics

Hair care

Clothing

Watches

IT equipment

Or perhaps you could look at services or 'public service' type advertisements for things like:

The military

Quitting smoking

Staying healthy

Holidays in certain places

Or you could try to look at a theme or idea within a range of categories of advertisements, such as:

The family
Children
Success

Good health
Freedom
Romantic love

- b. Then you need to begin to find your advertisements. You will need to analyse at least five advertisements. You need to record carefully where you found each advertisement, the name of magazine/paper and its date.
- c. Make your research questions. You need three questions that you will use to guide your research. These questions need to focus on the techniques used in the advertisements, the messages within the advertisements, and allow you to make judgments about them.

It could be helpful to begin your research on one or two advertisements, looking at them broadly, and then make the research questions that can specifically link to the type of advertisement that you are looking at.

Possible questions:

- What verbal techniques are most common in _____ advertisements?
- What language register is most commonly used in _____ advertisements?
- How is technical jargon used in _____ advertisements?

- What types of links are there between the visuals and text in _____ advertisements?
- How do images support the text in _____ advertisements?
- To what extent is visual language important in _____ advertisements?
- What symbols and visual connotations are most common in _____ advertisements?

- How is the target audience of _____ advertisements attracted or focused on?
- What demographic is portrayed in _____ advertisements?

- How do _____ advertisements portray men/women/children?
- What hopes/fears do _____ advertisements rely on or create in their audience?

- What are the reasons for _____ advertisements using____(technique)____ so often?
- What impact do the messages in _____ advertising have on teens/men/women children?

Task 2: The Research

Use the following template to record the information that you gather on the advertisements. As you make your research questions, focus the notes on each advertisement on answering the questions that you have made.

Technique	Example	Effect
<hr/>		
Target audience:		
<hr/>		
Visual/verbal links and visual techniques:		
<hr/>		
Surface message:		
<hr/>		
Subtext:		

You will also need to record carefully where each advertisement is from.

Your Report

Before you begin your report, read the research report from the student exemplar and discuss its strengths and areas where it could be improved. Note especially how judgements are included in the report in the exemplar. You may not include any material from the exemplars in your report or in your notes.

You are now ready to present your conclusions in an **appropriate written format**. Structure and organise your information and ideas in your report to include:

An introduction stating the focus and scope of the research. You should include details about the advertisement you have selected, the ideas linking these together and the target audiences of these particular advertisements.

A body of accurate information from which relevant conclusions are drawn linked to your research questions, together with evidence to support the points you make.

a conclusion

a bibliography

Your report should show the use and control of writing conventions without intrusive errors. For excellence, the accurate use of writing conventions is required.

Write at least 500 words in your report. Include a bibliography. Attach to your report the notes you have taken to show the information you have selected from each text. Refer to the student exemplars for suggested appropriate formats.

Exemplar B: Merit

The Language of Automotive Advertising

Propose research question(s) and select relevant information from a range of referenced resources.
[first criterion]

Research Questions:

1. What main language techniques did I find?
2. What effects do these techniques have?
3. What sorts of appeals are projected to car buyers?

Research log:

DATE	KEY INFORMATION FOUND
26 May	Volkswagen Touran [NZ House and Garden] Slogan: Go Configure
3 June	Mazda 6 [AA Directions] Emotive words: European luxury
3 June	Mercedes B-Class [NZ House and Garden] Image: Parked on planet Rhetorical qu: How would you describe the B class? Emotive words: new, sporty, adaptable; flexibility; active lifestyle'
4 June	BMW three series [NZ House and Garden] Image: athlete Jargon: Innovative Active Steering Emotive words: unrivalled agility
9 June	Peugot 307 [NZ Listener] Image: boot as ski jump Slogan: so practical
9 June	Porsche Boxster [Metro] Image: open road / speed
11 June	Subaru All Wheel Drive. [Autocar] Jargon: Symmetrical All Wheel Drive
11 June	VW Passat [NZ House and Garden] Jargon: climatronic

Research Report: The Language of Automotive Advertising

The area of language I chose to research concerns automotive advertising. The reason I chose this area is because I was interested to see why the techniques are effective enough to encourage people to shell out \$50,000 for a rebadged Daewoo. For my research I chose to focus on the effect the language techniques have and the nature of appeal that is projected.

Visual Imagery

Visual images are an important feature in the advertising of vehicles because they are used to express the concept that the advertiser feels will be most effective in appealing to the target audience. This is shown clearly in the advertisements for the new BMW three series. The image used is the count down of an athlete to begin an event, counting to the new BMW three series. This projects an image of speed, strength and agility, appealing to a person's want for thrill and excitement. Another strong example of visual imagery is found in advertisements for the Porsche Boxster. The image of the Porsche

Overall, this research report:

- Presents accurate information coherently [but not in a sufficiently detailed way as required for excellence.]
- Interprets the information and draws relevant conclusions. [Limited qualitative judgements made - insufficient for excellence]

with its roof down speeding along the open road conjures feelings of both passion and excitement as well as appealing to the need to make a statement.

A strong use of visual imagery is also shown in advertisements for the new Mercedes B-Class. The ad features a new Mercedes parked on a far off barren planet. This gives the impression that the car is both modern and adaptable as well as elegant. It appeals to the buyer wanting to make a statement as well as to have a car that is versatile. The Peugeot 307 ad features the car in the foreground with its boot being used as a ski ramp set against a picture perfect mountain range. This image makes a humorous link with the slogan 'so practical'. The image of the car is made to seem like it can bring you closer to nature just by owning it, which could be a good selling strategy for car buyers living in the city but who crave some of the outdoors.

Jargon

Jargon is used to explain the technical nature and features of a vehicle, appealing to what people want in a car, or to make the technology of the car seem more advanced than it actually is. A prime example of the latter is found in advertisements for Subaru All Wheel Drive. The text below the image of a car promotes the 'Symmetrical All Wheel Drive'. This feature sounds modern and powerful, appealing to those who are looking for more than just a city going car. It also provides a feeling of safety and of technological advancement. In the advert for the BMW three series, 'Innovative Active Steering' is presented as a feature of the car. This provides a feeling of safety and flexibility. This appeals to a desire for a car that is both safe and adaptable. The advert for the new VW Passat talks about a 'climatronic' control system. This is a neologism that is used as jargon. It gives the car a feeling of technical prowess as well as a sense of innovation. It appeals to our need to feel superior, many cars have climate control, only this one has a climatronic control system, and also our need to stay ahead of the competition with ultra-modern technology.

Jargon is technical in nature and authoritarian in tone. It helps advertisers describe the physical features of the car, as well as to give the product a false sense of superiority.

Emotive Words

Emotive word use is a prominent feature in car advertisements. They are meant to express that the product will fill a void in your life, even if you are unaware that such a thing existed. In the advertisement for the new BMW three series it talks of the car having 'unrivalled agility'. The effect produced is one of finesse and power, as well as one of safety. By buying this car these feelings will be transferred onto you. The finesse and agility no longer belong to the car, they belong to you, providing the owner with a sense of superiority over other road users. In advertisements for the new Mercedes B-class, it talks of the car having the 'flexibility' needed for an 'active lifestyle'. This targets buyers who wish to lead an active life by implying that the flexibility needed for this lifestyle is only attainable by buying a one hundred thousand dollar wagon. Another prominent example of emotive words is found in ads for the new Mazda 6. It talks of 'European luxury' giving the implication that the car looks and feels more expensive than it actually is. The connotations surrounding the word 'European' are sophisticated and fashionable. An appeal is made to the need for some to feel important and wealthy, even when the degree of importance and wealth they are looking for is unattainable. After all, it is only 'Japanese' not 'European luxury' that the buyer is actually getting.

Conclusion

The key motivation for any car advertiser is to sell a large amount of product. To do this they are ruthless, preying on the emotions of the buyers. The jargon provides the embellishment, the emotive words play on insecurities and the visual images do a mixture of both, forcing people to pay for a car when what they really need is a bicycle.

Information is interpreted and conclusions drawn about appeals and effects.

Limited judgements made here, but judgements are not sustained at sufficient level throughout the

Looks at sources separately. Does not integrate information / conclusions from more than one source to construct new understandings. (needed for excellence: "qualitative judgements with

Information is interpreted

Generalised attempt made to integrate information and conclusions from more than

Referenced resources means that a written bibliography is included in the presentation.

Bibliography

BMW three series [NZ House and Garden] May 2006
Mazda 6 [AA Directions] March 2006
Mercedes B-Class [NZ House and Garden] Feb 2006
Peugot 307 [NZ Listener] April 2006
Porsche Boxster [Metro] March 2006
Subaru All Wheel Drive. [Autocar] Nov 2005
Volkswagen Touran [NZ House and Garden] May 2006
VW Passat [NZ House and Garden] April 2006

Structure and organise information and ideas in an appropriate written format:

- Introduction stating focus of research
- Body of accurate information presented
- Relevant conclusions drawn from information presented
- Use and control of writing conventions without intrusive errors

[third criterion]

2.8 Mark schedule (AS 90381)

Investigate a language or literature topic and present information in written form

Achievement Criteria

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose research question(s) and select relevant information from a range of referenced resources. Present accurate information and draw relevant conclusions. Structure and organise information and ideas in an appropriate written format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose research question(s) and select relevant information from a range of referenced resources. Present accurate information coherently, interpreting the information, and drawing relevant conclusions. Structure and organise information and ideas in an appropriate written format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose research question(s) and select relevant information from a range of referenced resources. Present accurate and detailed information coherently, interpreting the information, making qualitative judgements about it and drawing relevant conclusions with close links to the question(s). Structure and organise information and ideas in an appropriate and effective written format.